WOODS HOLE OCEANOGRAPHIC INSTITUTION

ORAL HISTORY OF SUSAN PETERSON

Interview by Frank Taylor, January 21, February 12 and March 19, 2003

1st of 3 tapes transcribed by Arel Lucas in May 2005

VOICE: Ready to roll tape.

TAYLOR: Anytime you're ready.

PETERSON: Wait, what about the makeup and hair people?

VOICE: It's perfect!

PETERSON: Aren't they com . . . ? I mean you know it's . . . . [Laughs.]

TAYLOR: I ask him that every time. He tells me it's absolutely hopeless in my case.

VOICE: Yeah.

PETERSON: Well, it's so dry--the static electricity. I felt like my hair was kind of coming off my head. I kept sticking it down, but it keeps . . . .

TAYLOR: Really, it looks fine.

PETERSON: It's OK? It's white.

VOICE: Yeah, yeah.

PETERSON: I should have blued it before I came.

VOICE: I could do that for you if you want. [They laugh.]

PETERSON: A little spray paint?

VOICE: No, I'll just change the color. [Laughs.] But, no, it looks good. That's OK. And, yeah, whenever you're ready, Frank.

TAYLOR: OK, it is a very, very cold January day in the year '03, and we're here at the McLean Laboratories at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution to do an oral history with Susan Peterson, who is really kind of unique in that she's an anthropologist and connected to the

Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, and we certainly will address that and what she's done with her anthropology, and how all this came about, but to start off with, could you tell me a little bit about yourself, where you came from, when you were born, all that sort of thing?

PETERSON: Sure. I was born in Illinois in 1946, and I lived there until I escaped. [They laugh.] One of my undergraduate professors at the University of Illinois went to the University of Hawaii to teach, and so I thought, "Well, that sounds good." So after I graduated from college, I applied to the University of Hawaii for graduate school and went there, and studied the fishing industry there. I had a wonderful time living in Hawaii, for a kid who grew up in Illinois whose family was loving but not very adventurous. Wisconsin was where you went, so that's for the equivalent of New Englanders, that's kind of going over the bridge.

TAYLOR: Let me ask you a question. What part of Illinois?

PETERSON: The Chicago suburbs.

TAYLOR: Because my wife is from Des Plaines. That's why I'm curious.

PETERSON: Well, Western Springs, so not far, maybe 15 miles from where your wife is from.

TAYLOR: And tell me about your mom and dad.

PETERSON: My mom was a homemaker. That's what they did in those days, and my dad was a real-estate appraiser. He worked for John Hancock until John Hancock left the Chicago area and came back to Boston. He didn't want to move to Boston. He'd grown up in Boston, but he didn't want to come back, so we stayed in Illinois, and he worked for a couple of large companies doing essentially the estate part, the real-estate part of the greater city of Chicago, which was wonderful, because his company--Chicago Title and Trust--had the titles of all the buildings. Most of the records for the city had burnt down in the great Chicago fire, so his company had one of the complete sets of records. The courthouse had burnt down, so there was no . . . . So they kind of had a monopoly--kind of! They had a monopoly, and they used it wisely to their own profit.

TAYLOR: What were their names, your mom and dad?

PETERSON: My dad's name is John Blackmore, known as Jack, and my mom is Jane Hedden[SP?] Blackmore, both Swedish, so I grew up in a second- and third-generation Swedish household, with all the Swedish traditions and foods and Swedish language in the background, with cousins and aunts and uncles, but don't speak a word of it.

TAYLOR: How about siblings?

PETERSON: I have an older brother, John, who lives in Tennessee, who runs the Seeman's[SP?] plant down there. They build electrical stuff. And uh my sister Sarah[SP?] lives still in the Chicago suburbs, very near my parents. She's also a housewife and has three kids who are . . . . The last one just graduated from college, so . . . . She's married to a wonderful guy who does wonderful decals that you put on great big trucks, like the Gerlich's[SP?] truck. He's an applied artist, as we call it.

TAYLOR: Now, how about your schooling? Where did you go to school, the earliest years?

PETERSON: I went to Pleasantdale Grade School, which was a little school when I started in it. In the 1950s it was a four-room school, two up, two down, and in the growing Chicago suburbs, where . . . . We lived in an unincorporated area, which doesn't make any sense in New England, where everything is incorporated, but in the western states, like Illinois, there are towns and then there's nothing. It's land in the county, but we lived in an old farmhouse on five acres, and we had an orchard and a big field and a huge garden and no animals, but a really bucolic existence, a great place to grow up. We had a creek to play in. We caught crawfish. We mucked around.

TAYLOR: That was your interest as a kid?

PETERSON: Was mucking around, yeah. Yeah, I like mucking around. So then um I went to Lyons Township High School, which is a <u>big</u> high school. I graduated with over 1,000 kids in 1964, and in those days you could go to the University of Illinois if you were in the top 10 percent of your graduating class from high school. They <u>had</u> to take you, so I went. I had applied other places, but they cost too much money.

TAYLOR: Before we get to the University of Illinois, what were your favorite subjects in high school?

PETERSON: Oh, my absolutely <u>favorite</u> subject in grade school and high school was math. In grade school, my math teacher was Mr. Pierro[SP?], and he . . . . We were part of an experimental program called "New Math," that had been developed at the University of Chicago, and he was a graduate student there and was assigned to my grade school to teach New Math, and the textbook was mimeographed, because they were still revising it. And so I learned math from a completely opposite point of view. In sixth grade we only used the decimal sys . . . . We used based two, <u>all</u> of sixth grade. We didn't use base ten. So that was the experiment, and then in seventh grade we did other stuff, but it was just wonderful math. And my high school was part of the same program, and so all through sixth, seventh, eighth grade, and then the four years

of high school, I was in a very progressive math program, and scored very high on my SAT scores, because I learned math as sort of inserted into me rather than rote memory. It just happened. We lived it. We had a wonderful time.

TAYLOR: You learned to understand it rather than memorize it.

PETERSON: Yup. So I always thought I'd be a math major. But then when I went to the University of Illinois, it was a big, big campus, 25,000 kids in those days. I don't know what now, but um and you were assigned these giant classes, with 50 or 60 kids, and I was in the calculus class, and I couldn't understand a word he was saying. I shared no vocabulary words with him, and I got a "D," in a math class, and of course I'd always gotten A . . . . I'd gotten everything right, so I was really surprised that I couldn't get it, and I mean I [laughingly] finally did pass calculus, but it took me a long time to catch on to the way it was being taught, because it was being taught under conventional math, with conventional vocabulary. And it took me a couple of years to learn how to do it. So, in the meantime, because I then felt insecure about math, I started taking social-science classes, and one of the women who lived across the hall from me said that she was taking an anthropology class, and they were learning about fish poisons, and I thought, "Wow! That sounds interesting." So I signed up for an anthropology class, and it . . . .

TAYLOR: To learn about rotenone and things like that.

PETERSON: Right, and, well, how people in Central America were using fish poisons to catch fish. It was a fishing technology that was common.

TAYLOR: Could you tell me a little bit about your life at the University of Illinois? The reason I ask that: my wife graduated from there, and I visited it one time with her, and I was really astounded. That's the Act in that state, . . .

PETERSON: Yeah, that . . . .

TAYLOR: . . . and it had all the traditions of the Ivy Leagues, and it had huge grounds. It took me 45 minutes to drive around the place.

PETERSON: Ohhh!

TAYLOR: I mean I was really impressed with it.

PETERSON: Well, it was enormous, and if you were a freshman all of your classes were in the Armory, which is in the middle of nowhere. But most of the time I hated it. It was a huge campus. It was Illinois. It was cold. The dormitories had no comforts. Well, they did have

heat. They were noisy. They were just awful. The food was in the old days of the food. The food was terrible. You couldn't get a piece of lettuce if you begged for it. I can remember when they introduced lemons to put in the tea. That was considered revolutionary. You had to wear . . . . . [Laughs.] You had to wear a dress to dinner--oh, if you were a girl. If you were a boy, you couldn't wear a dress to dinner. And so all of us had these little outfits we'd put on, as you were going tearing down the stairs to dinner. It was sort of the equivalent of a muumuu, but it qualified as a dress. You threw it on. You went to dinner. You ate your dinner. You went back up to your dorm. The classes were very big, and their goal the freshman year was to flunk out a lot of kids, because they'd over admitted, because they had to. So it was very . . . . It wasn't at all nurturing, and even though I'd been to a huge high school, it was very nurturing. My high school was very demanding of you intellectually and socially. You were expected to participate in sports and theater and all kinds of things, and it was a very well rounded . . . . It was an upper-middle-class experience. And the University of Illinois was . . . . You were anonymous and uh really, your first few years you were in big lectures with well-known professors, but the teaching assistants that you had for your actual classes were graduate students who knew little more than we knew, it felt like. So I hated it and was really anxious to get out, so I doubled up, and I took as many classes per semester as I could, as was legal. I also wanted to get out of the dormitory, and in those days there was this "in loco parentis" thing. You couldn't live outside a dormitory unless you were 23 years old or not a full-time student. So by cramming lots of courses into my first 2-1/2 years, I figured out how I could be . . . . I'd take 11 hours for my second half of my, well, for most of my junior year, and then I graduated in the first semester of my senior year, having finally had my own apartment and gotten a decent night's sleep for the first time. Dormitories in those days were awful. I hope they've improved them.

TAYLOR: And there weren't many opportunities for let's say a social life or anything?

PETERSON: Oh, sure, I had a social life. I mean there were dances at the fraternities, and there were things at the student union. I had a group of friends who were pretty low-key. This was in the '60s, at really the start of the whole . . . . It was the start of the Vietnam War, and it was also the start of the counter-culture movement within America, and so things were . . . . Most of us were real uptight and straight middle-class kids, but we were beginning to see kids who did marijuana and started letting their hair grow. The Beatles had already come and gone, so it was the beginning of a transition, but the University of Illinois stayed pretty calm the whole time I

was there. I left in December of '67, so it really didn't get um weird there until the late '60s or early '70s. So I . . . . At the Ilini Union you could go to a movie for a quarter, so we went to a lot of movies. A quarter wasn't much, even in those days. I met my first husband there. He was also an anthropology student. He was a grownup. He had been at the University of Illinois majoring in chemistry and then left and worked in a lab for years, and then decided he hated chemistry, so he came back to do a degree in anthropology. So I met him the start of my junior year, and we both graduated the fall of what was my fourth year there, and as soon as we graduated we left and went to Europe, and we stayed in Europe until mid-August of '68. We got married in Switzerland in June of '68. We traveled all over. It was so wonderful. We had no money, but you didn't need any. You could stay in a hotel for $4 a night, and it included breakfast, so . . . .

TAYLOR: Was this just kind of a Grand Tour, or were there . . . ?

PETERSON: It was my Grand Tour. I had friends in Switzerland, and I had friends in England, so we kind of just futzed around. He went to the Goethe Institute because he wanted to learn to speak German, and we had applied to the University of Hawaii for graduate school, and they didn't accept people until September, so we just had a wonderful time. We went all over Italy and Greece and France and Germany and, while he was in school in Germany, I lived in Switzerland with friends, and every weekend we'd meet in a different city and tour the museums. It was all in the winter. I've never been so cold. Ohh!

TAYLOR: Now there's a significant change. You're talking about the '60s, and this is when you got out of school, and I got out in the mid-50s, and my heavens, if I'd gotten out in the middle of a senior year, I would have had absolutely no sympathy for the idea of taking a Grand Tour. I would have been expected to get some kind of job until something in my field opened up.

PETERSON: Well, see what I had done was, when I was in high school I babysat a lot. I really liked kids, and I was good with them. I made a ton of money, and in civics class my sophomore year in high school, I learned about the stock market, and so I started following some stocks. So I had $800 in my savings account at the savings and loan, where one of my dad's best friends worked. So I said to my dad's best friend, Mr. Booze[SP?], Ray Booze[SP?], I said, "Ray, I want to take that money and invest it, and I don't know how." So he and my dad said, "Well, she should keep some in her account," and then I showed them the stocks that I'd been following

that I wanted to invest in, so they figured out how. In those days, it wasn't like now, when everybody's invested in the stock market. In those days, my parents weren't invested. I mean my parents still aren't invested in the stock market. They put it in the bank. So I invested the money, and I made a lot of money. I ended up with $3,000 by the time I . . . . And I didn't have to spend it to go to college, because my dad paid a little. My brother was in college. I was in college. My sister was in high school. I worked during college, so I didn't have to spend very much of it. I didn't have a car, no expenses, and I didn't eat much. I was a little skinny thing. So I saved that money, and so, when I graduated from college, I spent not all of it, only half of it, on my Grand Tour, saved the rest.

TAYLOR: It must have been kind of like a release to you, because you didn't like the situation you'd been in.

PETERSON: Oh, I hated the University of Illinois, but in part because it was Illinois, and I was anxious to move on. I love my parents. They're wonderful, but they're very conservative, and I wanted to see a little bit more of the world. They were really nervous about me going off to Europe, but hey! Although by that time--this was the start of '68--the anti-American sentiment in Europe was pretty strong, because of the Vietnam War. So there were a lot of places . . . . They were bombing US information centers in Germany. There were a lot of German cities we didn't go to because of the anti-American sentiment, and in <u>some</u> places we claimed we were Canadian, because it was very anti-American, particularly with young people, our own age. The grownups didn't care, but the people in their early 20s were very anti-American. There were general strikes. There were riots in Paris that summer while we were there in the University section, so it was a difficult time to be an American. While I was in Munich one weekend, President Nixon devalued the dollar and all the banks shut, and they wouldn't exchange any money, so I learned how to live for 48 hours with no money. For a kid from Illinois these were all pretty exciting experiences.

TAYLOR: I'm wondering, because you were studying anthropology, did you look at this whole situation over in Europe at all critically in terms of what is causing this? The reason I asked that is I know from personal experience that if you go to a country like Norway the people that are like 50 and over still revere the Americans. They remember the Second World War, but those that were 30 and under, it was a completely different outlook.

PETERSON: Well, because the second war was still so evident in most of the places that I went. In Berlin it was still divided. The Berlin Wall was there, and you have to go through East Germany to get into Berlin. You had to have a special passport. You weren't allowed off the train when you were in the eastern sector. You got to Berlin and it just ended. You could look . . . . The western half of Berlin, the European half of Berlin was still not rebuilt, and we did get a permit to go into East Berlin, and it was as if you stepped back into 1946. The buses were the same. Many of the streets had not been repaved. Many of the buildings were still not rebuilt, just shells, and this was in 1968, so there was a very strong anti-war feeling in Europe, because the results of the second war were still in their face, and the last thing they wanted was another one, particularly with the Americans being the aggressors in this case.

TAYLOR: Well, we were also moving, during the period you were over there, into a period of great civil unrest here in the United States. Can you remember back to any of your thinking process about what you were seeing, because you don't strike me as a person that just kind of flitted through and . . . ?

PETERSON: Well, there were a couple of things, not only the anti-American sentiment in Europe, but Martin Luther King was assassinated when I was in Europe. Actually, I was in Switzerland, and I went to . . . . One of the Swiss churches had a memorial service for him, so I went, and it was very moving, and then later that year Bobby Kennedy was assassinated, so my view of those assassinations was from reading about them in the European newspapers in my bumbling German, and reading the *Herald-Tribune*, and that summer there were riots in Chicago, with the '68 election--as you probably recall--and so I came back from Europe sort of into those riots, came back in August, and thought the United States had fallen apart. Europe looked very stable and calm and well-reasoned, and while I was in Europe, hearing what was happening in the United States, with the race riots and then political assassinations, I felt as if my country had turned into a Third World country.

TAYLOR: About how old were you at this time?

PETERSON: I was 21, almost. I mean I was 21 in . . . yeah I was 21. I was 22 in uh late September. By then I was already in Hawaii. I moved to Honolulu on September 5, 1968, and I moved to Woods Hole on September 5, 1973, so I was in Hawaii for exactly five years.

TAYLOR: I'm still trying to get at this thinking process. I happen to have been in Chicago during that.

PETERSON: During the riots?

TAYLOR: Yeah.

PETERSON: Yeah.

TAYLOR: And my wife has two sisters, and one--she was maybe 20, 21 at the time, and it really radicalized her.

PETERSON: It sure did me.

TAYLOR: To this day.

PETERSON: I grew up. I only knew Republicans. I mean I grew up in one of those white suburbs, and when I say "white," I mean <u>really</u> white. In my high school class of over 1,000, there were, I think, four black kids and two Jewish kids. I mean this is, you know--these were predominantly Protestant, not very many Catholics, and it was that lily-white American, Western European, . . .

TAYLOR: Very few Japanese cars.

PETERSON: Oh, no! Japanese. We had Volkswagens. I had a Volkswagen bug. Even though it was the late '60s it was still the 1950s culturally, at least in Illinois. I mean I think things had broken on the Coast, but in the center of American it could have been 1952 rather than 1968. I mean we still wore white gloves and shoes and stockings. I mean stockings! I mean they had invented pantyhose but just barely. It was a peculiar time. Women didn't wear pants. You couldn't wear pants. As I said, you couldn't wear them to dinner, but when you went out some place you wore a dress. And nowadays, gosh, you can count the number of times you wear a dress on the fingers of one hand.

TAYLOR: But it's an interesting period in your life as I sit and listen to this, because a very traditional, very conservative middlewestern background, now you're starting to gain some of the rest of the world and how they see things, and a split's starting to take place here.

PETERSON: Oh, it was a lovely time for <u>me</u>. I mean I started to . . . . Well, one of the wonderful things about being in Europe was Penguin Books. Almost all of the bookstores in every medium-sized European city had Penguin Books in English, and these were British classics. And so I read the entire C. P. Snow series, because you go into a bookstore, you buy what's in English. [Laughs.] So I had a classical education by default, because it's all you could buy, and I love to read, and I could also, when I was living in Winterthur, a city outside of

Zurich, they had a library with an English section, so I could go there, but again it was mostly the classics. So I read a lot of the English authors and had a wonderful time.

TAYLOR: At this point, were you kind of saying to yourself, "This is why I want to get out of Illinois"?

PETERSON: Oh, I knew why I [laughingly] wanted to get of Illinois from probably the time I was 10, but I think that as many people can make major life changes living in the same space. They can somehow leap the cultural bounds or the inhibitions, the censure of family or friends, but I was too wimpy for that. I had to go away to become who I was going to be. I had to get outside of the sort of constant dampening effect of family and friends. So, for me, going to Europe first . . . . And I wouldn't have done it if it hadn't been for John Peterson. He had been to Europe before. He was five years older than I, and he was also anxious to leave Illinois, so we left together, and we had a great time. We traveled around. We came back to Illinois for a couple of weeks and repacked our stuff and headed for Hawaii.

TAYLOR: What made the Hawaiian decision?

PETERSON: Well, David Ide[SP?], who was our professor when we were undergraduates at the University of Illinois, had left to take a job at the University of Hawaii, and he is a specialist in Polynesia, and actually there were quite a few people at the University of Illinois who had expertise in the Pacific--Melanesia, Micronesia, Polynesia--so we had had a pretty decent undergraduate education on the anthropology of that part of the world. You have to remember Margaret Mead had written quite a bit about Pacific Island culture, so the literature that was readily available wasn't about the culture of the United States, it was about the culture of exotic places. In those days, anthropologists went to exotic places, so we were going to go get trained at the University of Hawaii and then go off to New Guinea or someplace exotic and do field work.

TAYLOR: Was Margaret Mead kind of a role model for you at that point?

PETERSON: Well, to some extent. She hadn't written her autobiography yet, which I think came out in the early '70s. Was it *Blackberry Summer*? [*Blackberry Winter*] I've forgotten the name of it, but I think that's it. But she was certainly known. My funny story about Margaret Mead is I went to an American Anthropological Association meeting in the late '60s in California, and it was in a big hotel, and Margaret Mead was a character, and she wore a hat with a feather in it, and a cape, and carried this big staff, [clears throat] and we were all standing at the

elevator, and we pushed the "down" button, because we all were going to go down to the bar, and she pushed the "up" button because she was going to go up to her room, and the elevator came, and it signaled "down," and we all got in, and she got in too, and she pounded on the ground with her stake and pushed the button for her floor and the damn thing went up. [They laugh.] And all the rest of us, who were lowly graduate students, just went "Huuhhhh." So she did have magic. [Laughs.]

TAYLOR: She certainly did, and she certainly communicated a lot of that to the general public. I can remember the thing that turned me off against Polynesian studies was struggling through Bronislaw Malinowski . . .

PETERSON: Ah.

TAYLOR: . . . and the Trobriand Islanders and things like that. I said, "Oh my heavens!"

PETERSON: See, I loved that stuff. [Clears throat.] I loved it--the whole "Cargo Cult" business. I loved the economics of it. I loved learning how people traded things, and I really enjoyed the [clears throat] nuances of the languages and the essentially voluntary associations, the groups that people formed. I loved learning about their food. I like food. So I had a great time being an anthropologist.

TAYLOR: But this was kind of a general look. What were you going to specialize in? What was your particular interest?

PETERSON: Well, you know when you get there. I was very interested in education and how people learn. So I also didn't have any money, and it was in the old days, so my husband John Peterson had a grant, a fellowship, and I didn't, because I was the wife, even though I was a graduate student. This was the '60s. And so um I didn't like being poor. So I lived next door to Mother Rice Pre-School, which is the oldest continually operating private preschool in Hawaii, and in Hawaii there's a long tradition of both parents working and kids being cared for by grandparents and great-grandparents, but [clears throat] this school had been founded in the late 1890s, right next door to me, and I walked by it every day, and I took an introductory culture-of-education, culture-of-learning class from a professor named Steve Boggs[SP?], and he wanted us to go out and do field work and find out how kids learned. So I went over to Mother Rice Pre-School next door, and I asked the principal if I could observe in one of the classes as part of my coursework, and she said, "Sure." So I observed, and I wrote up a little paper about how it was racially integrated kids. There were Chinese, Filipino, Hawaiian, Japanese, Samoan kids, and

what I was looking at were the way that different kids, by sex, age and cultural background, were learning how to read. I was working with the 4- and 5-year-olds, and I had a wonderful time. I wrote up a little paper, but I also loved being there, and so, at the end of my little research stint there, the principal said, "You know, we're always looking for substitute teachers. Do you think you'd be interested?" And I said, "Sure." It was a great commute. It took me about 30 seconds to get there. So whenever one of the teachers called in sick, she'd call me at 6 o'clock in the morning and say, "Can you teach today?" And so I arranged all of my classes so that my graduate work was all done after 3 o'clock in the afternoon, which meant there were a few courses I never got to take, but so I was always available to teach, and I never worked full-time, because the pay wasn't very good, but for a substitute teacher I made $38 a day, which was a fortune! I mean, it really was a fortune, I mean even if I only taught two or three days a week. I mean my rent was $110 a month, so you can see, I mean I wasn't . . . . I made a lot of money. We didn't have any expense. We didn't have a car that first year, but then we bought a car. So I taught at Mother Rice Pre-School until . . . . Well, I worked there for three years part time, but the first summer I was there, another professor took a group of us over to the Island of Molokai, and [clears throat] I didn't know what I was going to do there. I was going to look at education, but there were no classes going on there in the summer, so I kind of wandered around the island on my bicycle, because I didn't have a car, and I discovered . . . . It's a small island. It had maybe 1,000 people on it. It had 18 churches, and so I got really interested in the churches and finding out how they'd been established and so on and so forth, and it turned out that the churches . . . that sort of extended families built their own church. They had their own graveyard, and a number of these were charismatic Christian churches, and that was pretty interesting, so but that isn't what I did my research on. My first husband did his Ph.D. thesis on the Hawaiian churches of Molokai because he got even more interested than I did. At the same time that I was looking at the churches, I got really interested in all the pineapples, and the pineapple plantations. And the Hawaiians who lived there were granted homestead rights, 40-acre homesteads, under the Hawaiian Homestead Act, and what was interesting was, in order to qualify for one of these 40-acre parcels, which were in the middle of the desert, you had to be 50 percent Hawaiian by blood, so I got interested in the math and the intermarriage rates with Hawaiians and non-Hawaiians in the Islands. The Europeans had been there by then 100 years, so it was pretty easy to trace most of the lineages, and going back to my love of math, I started

doing a computer simulation of what, using just the statistics from current marriage rates, to find out how long there would be enough Hawaiians who qualified for Hawaiian homesteads. And this was my first foray into applied anthropology, and it became very controversial, because when I presented the data, I presented it not only to the families I'd been interviewing, but I presented it to the local legislators, and saying, "Look, this is a federal homestead act, but pretty soon you've going to have all this land that nobody qualifies for. You really need to get that legislation changed, because people should be qualifying that on the basis of culture, not blood." And what it didn't allow for was, say a Hawaiian couple who were 75 percent Hawaiian or something. Their children may be qualified, but if their children married a non-Hawaiian, a Filipino, then those kids weren't 50 percent Hawaiian. In a lot of cases, the tradition in Hawaii is that when a young woman has children, the first two are kind of practice kids, and the parents raise those, and she may not marry the father, and she may eventually marry that guy, or he may be a dud, so she marries another one, and then may have three, four or five children altogether, but the first few children are generally raised by the grandparents. And so here were the grandparents raising these kids on these tracts of land, on these farms, which were mostly pineapple plantations that they leased to the pineapple companies. These kids didn't qualify to inherit the land. So it was a fascinating study. So that's what I did the first summer.

TAYLOR: OK, let me you ask you a few questions on that, because it's interesting. I'm seeing a pattern here. This is not the kind of thing that the average kid from the Midwest during the '50s, '60s is going to be looking at. You did, though, have the Vietnam experience; you had your European experiences. That probably gave you some other insights of the way you wanted to go. And then you got into the Island of Oahu, in Honolulu, and kind of by chance, ended up in this teaching situation, but you were starting to use your anthropology almost in a political sense.

PETERSON: Oh, yeah, and I loved it, because I really liked doing applied things. I'm not theoretical. I mean I love doing models, and I love doing computer simulations, and, as you'll hear, I've done a lot of them, but I want it to go somewhere.

TAYLOR: The youngsters and the families that you were dealing with. I'm trying to get a picture. The average person that's going to listen to this is going to picture a suburban classroom somewhere like in Wellesley or Western or something like that.

PETERSON: Oh . . . . [Laughs.].

TAYLOR: This is not the way, then, and when you talk about the land grant, people would have to know, are we talking the wet side of the island, are we talking the dry side of the island?
PETERSON: The dry, the west end and the dry side of the island is where the land was given, and there were Hawaiian homesteads on Molokai, Maui and Hawaii, but all in the arid sections, and so almost all of them were leased back to either sugarcane or the pineapple companies. The wet end, the really lush, tropical stuff, is where the white people owned the land, the haolis, so they didn't make that available for native Hawaiians.
TAYLOR: And I know that if you go to the lot of the dry sides of the island you see incredible poverty. This is not the Hawaii you see in tourism.
PETERSON: Oh, no, everybody was poor in those days. This was in the '60s. The dominant industry in Hawaii in the '60s was the military. The military had bases, mostly on Oahu, but also on the Big Island. The Vietnam War was being staged, in part, out of Hawaii. Um the folks were coming back to Hawaii for R & R, so [clears throat] the military presence was huge, and it was kind of nice to go to Molokai, where there wasn't a military presence, but most of the folks that I was working with on the Island of Molokai lived . . . . They were subsistence. I mean they had jobs, but they were part-time jobs. Maybe they drove the school bus during the school year. They fished. They raised pigs. They had a goat. They had an agricultural plot. They had banana trees. They had papaya tress. Things grow like crazy there, so having food wasn't so much of a problem, and it was a lot of barter. In later years when I would go back to Molokai, I would bring things. They'd phone up. They'd say, "OK, coming on Thursday night, bring . . . . I need a new tire for my car." So I'd go buy a tire and I'd bring it over, and they wouldn't pay me for the tire, but then I would get fish or guavas or papayas for whatever period of time accumulated enough goodness to fill up the cost of the tire. Or I would be asked to bring things from markets over there that they couldn't get, some kinds of bread and things, because I was coming back and forth a lot. They had my phone number. They'd just call and say, "Hey, bring . . . ." So there was a lot of non-monetary exchange.
TAYLOR: Well, to find a barter system in the world at that particular period is kind of unusual.
PETERSON: Well, they still exist, and people lived in houses. They were single-wall construction, but you didn't need more. You didn't need insulation. It was never cold. Sixty-eight was real cold. So um you wore shorts and T-shirts, and you wore those little rubber sandals, zoris, and you didn't need a lot of stuff, and it was very sociable, parties all the time,

people were always having dinners or luaus or whatever, making pigs and stuff, so there was just a lot of community sharing. There were always events--somebody's birthday or a wedding, or birth of a baby, something to be celebrated, so it was very casual, and you didn't need to have a car there. You could just hitchhike, because you knew everybody. It's only a small group of people. I can remember that first summer I was there, [laughs] they were building a reservoir up on the island, and I'd been there a couple of weeks, and I was hitchhiking back to the house I was staying in, and a guy stopped and picked me up and he says, "You know, we could really use you because we're putting this liner in the reservoir, and in order to do it you have to weigh less than 150 lb. or they'll break the liner," and the Polynesians are traditionally big people. And I said, well, I had a job. [Laughs.] But he said, "Well, we'll pay really well." But I turned it down, so I did have an opportunity to put a liner in a reservoir that summer that I passed up.

TAYLOR: Your husband was involved in the same kinds of things. How did you and he interact during this period? I mean was this your dinnertime conversation?

PETERSON: Oh, yeah, we lived it. Anthropology was what we did. He was much more of the intellectual, serious scholar, knew all of the history of anthropology. Anthropology, as with ecology and oceanography, is a relatively new discipline. It's not very deep. You can go back to the originators, and they're not that much older than you are, and you knew people who were taught by them, so it's generationally quite shallow, so um most of our major professors at the University of Hawaii and at the University of Illinois had been taught by the founders of the discipline in the United States and in Europe, so it's what we read. We talked about stuff. He is . . . . He was (He's dead now.) much more conservative academically. I was much more willing to do applied anthropology. He wanted to do the pure stuff.

TAYLOR: How did the University of Hawaii factor into this?

PETERSON: Oh, they were great, great faculty. Anthropology then was a very strong discipline there. The Bishop Museum, which is an old institution, housed many of the artifacts throughout the Pacific Islands, was a <u>well</u>-established institution. A lot of mainland anthropologists came out to do research based at the University of Hawaii <u>or</u> at the Bishop Museum. So we were . . . . Raymond Firth, who was one of the most famous anthropologists, used to come and spend the summers at our house. [Laughs.] I still have the sheets. I saved them. [They laugh.] So Margaret Mead never came to <u>stay</u> with us, but she did . . . . But I would meet her. So this was again a small enough discipline, and Hawaii was a tremendous . . . . It was a jumping-off place.

If you were going to work in the Philippines, or if you were going to work in Japan, or anywhere in the Pacific, you would come and stay at the University of Hawaii and bone up on your language skills or read the most recent literature, because we had a great library. So it was a wonderful place to work, but I was going to tell one more part of the story, because it's how I got to Woods Hole. When I was in my second year in graduate school, still doing teaching. Well, between the time I left Molokai that summer, and the time classes started again in the fall, I told you I was rich as a graduate student, because I'd been teaching for $38 a day, John Peterson and I went to Japan, and we went for three and a half weeks, and this was the summer before the Olympics were held in Japan, so it wasn't really Americanized yet. They were just starting to put the signs up. But we made all the arrangements through . . . . We lived in the Moiliili District of Honolulu, which was Japanese district, and so we went to a Japanese travel agent, and we told him what we wanted to do, and he said, "So you really want a Japanese experience?" We said, "Yeah," so he set up for us to go to Kyoto, Osaka, Tokyo, and so forth, and stay at places the Japanese people stayed at, rather than places Americans stayed at. So in the most of the places where we went . . . . We had all the tickets and everything, so it wasn't a true adventure. We just didn't go cold turkey. We had reservations and train tickets, and so forth, but most of the places where we stayed the people spoke no English. It was long enough ago. So we spent three and a half weeks. They were wonderful, but the only people who spoke English to us were kids, because the kids were learning, like 8-, 9-, 10-year-olds. They were fascinated . We'd go to the zoo. All of a sudden there'd be this huge crowd of kids, and John Peterson used to tell a joke about me, because . . . talk about culturally insensitive, I'd been living in this Moilili section in Honolulu, where I was tall. I'm not quite 5'2", so surrounded by Japanese ladies and a lot of Japanese-American kids and so on and so forth. So we [laughingly] got to Japan and these kids would talk to us, and I said to him, "How do they know we're foreign?" [They laugh.] And of course we're white. But in Honolulu, you got so used to being surrounded by people of different culture, and you were all there, you weren't foreign there. So he teased me about that for years. Anyway, I got really interested in the food there, and particularly the fish and began looking at some of the fishing stuff, so when I came back from my second year in graduate school I got interested in fish, and in the Chinatown district of Honolulu there was this wonderful open-air market, traditional um Asian-style market with all kinds of fish and stuff and each one was culturally unique. I mean there was a Japanese, and a

Chinese, and Filipino, and a Portuguese. Portuguese is a separate ethnic group in Hawaii, an artifact from the whaling history--Portuguese whalers who stayed in Hawaii. So even though many of them looked Caucasian, they were culturally distinct. They were Portuguese. That was a designation. I was a haoli. So I started going down to that market and introducing myself to people and finding out where the fish came from, and then pretty soon one of the Chinese guys told me about the fish auction, and I said, "Well, can I go to that?" He said, "Sure. Meet me here tomorrow morning at 4:30, and I'll take you to the fish auction." So I <u>went</u>, and I just loved it. It was in a huge room, a concrete floor, and . . . .

[END OF SIDE 1. Side 2 repeats the last four lines.]

PETERSON: . . . at 4:30 in the morning, people would start bringing in fish. It was a display auction. And the first thing would come in all these tunas, and they would just line them up, and on each one there was a slip of paper slapped on it with the name of the boat and the weight of the fish, and a guy with a machete would come along and go whap! whap! and take a little wedge out of the tail of the tuna, [clears throat] right with the start of the fin, and all these fish would be lined up, and they were cold, and it just smelled delicious. It smelled fishy, and it was cool then in the morning, and there was ice piled everywhere, to keep everything fresh, and at 5 o'clock in the morning, the bell would ring, and all these folks would wander in, [clears throat] and they would grab a bit of flesh out of this open wound, and they'd [sniffs] sniff it, and they'd [smacking lips] taste it, and then they'd throw it on the floor, and they'd walk to the next fish, and then another bell would ring, and the auction would start, and each fish was auctioned off, and it was just delightful. And then most of the fish went for sushi, sushi meaning various raw fish dishes. Some of it was shipped to Japan, because at that time, in the late '60s and early '70s, the price of fish in Japan was outrageously high. It may still be. And then after the tuna auction came in all the small fish, the barrels and bags and boxes of different kinds of fish--snappers and mackerels, and so on and so forth--and those would be auctioned off by the tub, and then they'd all be taken back to the various fish stalls and apportioned out and taken to retail markets, and so I followed the whole thing, and I learned about the boats, and I got to go out in some of the fishing boats, and <u>that</u> was the thing I really loved.

TAYLOR: But you were studying it from a cultural viewpoint rather than, for lack of a better term, an ichthyological standpoint.

PETERSON: Well, yeah, although [laughs] I learned a lot about the fish, because one of the things that you had to know about in order to do what I eventually did, which was to do a computer simulation of market behavior, you had to know when fish were available. And their availability was governed by environmental conditions--the weather, the season, the water temperature, different wind patterns and so on and so forth. So I learned a lot about the natural history of the fish, how they were caught, what depth they were found at. All of that information was eventually woven into my thesis, because I could use that to predict availability, which would allow me to predict price, and I could do some of it based on observations made by the fishermen, and some made on recorded observations by people not at all involved in the fishing industry, the weather people, and so on and so forth. I tried to get . . . . This was in the early days of Sea Grant. The Sea Grant Bill had been passed, and we had a Sea Grant Department at the University of Hawaii, and I thought it'd be nice to have some money rather than teaching preschool, because, see, I'd go down to the fish auction at 4 in the morning, and then I'd be done in time I could go back and teach nursery school, and then go take my classes, and so I wanted a grant, and so I tried to get money from Sea Grant, but they explained to me that anthropology wasn't a science, and that they only funded scientific research, and it turned out to be a joke later. I mean they still smile at my dissertation. They have it in the Sea Grant library there. They talk about it as a wonderful Sea Grant product, but they didn't pay for it. Listen up, Sea Grant! [They laugh.] So I kept working and teaching and stuff. Then I got, every now and then, one of the fish dealers would hire me to man their stalls, because they wanted to go off and meet friends for a while, so I learned how to cut fish, and I learned how to sell fish. I was studying Japanese at the time, so I could eavesdrop on conversations going on. It was learning a part of the world that was pretty neat. I had a good time.

TAYLOR: So you, essentially, when you flew out over to the West Coast, from that point on you pretty much totally immersed yourself in the culture of the area you were going to. You ceased being an American.

PETERSON: Oh, yeah, I learned the local dialect pretty well. I did continue to do some education things. I did one summer course the next summer with a bunch of kids way out in the western part of Oahu, a really poor group, looking at young girls and how they formed playgroups there. But mostly I . . . even my fellow graduate students were from all over the world. That was the wonderful thing about Hawaii. Carl Hudderer[SP?], who is an

anthropologist--he'd been in the Philippines. He was in my year class, a delightful guy, still a good friend. He's now in Santa Barbara, at the museum there. So Jean[SP?] Kennedy, also an anthropologist, wanted to do her work in Burma, but wasn't ever let in, but speaks Burmese now, is in Australia. My year class was pretty small.

TAYLOR: Did you have a sense of adventure?

PETERSON: Oh, yeah, tremendous. You were always learning new stuff. I mean again you're from Illinois. Everything's new. Learning the languages, learning the way, in the fish part, learning how the market ran was really fascinating for me. I really enjoyed figuring out how the dealers were making judgments about the fish and what their knowledge base was. One of the fun things that I did which had nothing to do with my dissertation, but I did it anyway, was one of the fellows I met was a Chinese Hawaiian named Willy Achan[SP?], who flew a fish-spotting plane to catch a kind of fish called akule. Akule is a kind of mackerel like fish, and it schools in the coastal ocean, and the Filipinos caught it. This was the tradition. So there were Filipino boats, and then there were a couple of guys who worked as fish spotters, and Willy[SP?] agreed to take me along, and so I learned to fly a Cessna, and I learned how to direct the guys how to drop the nets and catch the fish, and you could do it all from the air. Mostly we were on Oahu, but I did some fishing with him off of Molokai on Maui too, so I really enjoyed. I didn't hold back. When these opportunities came along, I did them.

TAYLOR: Was it ever frightening to you, when you were out in a fishing boat, based on the seas out there?

PETERSON: No, we were . . . . I never went very far out. Most of the fish caught in Hawaii at that time were on pretty small, wooden boats, 40, 50, 60 feet. The longest trip I was ever on was one of the tuna trips. We were out for three days, and we just sort of went way . . . . We stayed within the island chain. The Hawaiian Islands actually kind of curve out to the left. There are some little mountaintops, uninhabited, but most of it is very deep, there. It's a volcano. So you can catch tuna--well, you used to be able to catch tuna--close to shore. They're a deep-water fish, but the drop-off is really fast.

TAYLOR: I asked that, because several people from this institution have told me that as far as they were concerned the waters that frightened them the most were in the Hawaiian Islands, particularly where the water would get squeezed between islands and rise up, so forth?

PETERSON: I don't know. I had a great time. I mean that's mostly where we were catching the akule. I remember a few times landing the plane, we . . . . [Laughs.] If you had to pee you'd land the plane out in the wilderness in the middle of a pineapple field. So sometimes that made me a little nervous, but hey! I did stop flying after I started writing my dissertation, because I thought, "Oh-oh, I've learned all this. It's really time to be serious. Get the dissertation done rather than killing myself off flying into a power line in the middle of some pineapple plantation."

TAYLOR: You and your husband, pretty much in the same field, except his approach is a little different than yours: you had to make plans about what you were going to do after this. How did you work that out between the two of you?

PETERSON: Oh, finding a job was really hard. We were finishing up in the early '70s, and I actually didn't become a full-time student until the second year there, because I was looking for jobs and stuff. We both had Woodrow Wilson dissertation fellowships, which were available to people who finished their Ph.D.s within four or five years of starting. So I was in a hurry. I wanted to go in and get my degree and get a job and have a life, and he was in less of a hurry, but in '71, early '72, we started looking for jobs. We interviewed in a couple of places for job sharing, where we would share one position for two of us. And none of those seemed very likely, so in the fall of '72 I was at the American Anthropological Association meetings, and--I think it was November--I met a fellow who was here in the first year of the Marine Policy Program, whose name I can't remember--but we could look it up--who was an anthropologist and had studied fishing gear in Central America somewhere, or maybe South America, maybe Belize. There were a group of sort of fish anthropologists at a party, and we started talking, and he said, "You should really think about coming to Woods Hole Oceanographic," which I'd read about in the *National Geographic*, and I said, "And do what?" And he said, "Well, the stuff you're doing with fishing, you could do that" here. So I followed up with him after I got back--I was then writing my dissertation--and applied to the Marine Policy Program, and was accepted, and when I was accepted, it was great, because I'd lived in Hawaii by then for four and a half years, and George Cadwalader, who was the then director of the Marine Policy Program, telephoned. Well, it was only the second call from the Mainland I'd ever had. [Laughs.] It was very exciting. Everybody was, "Susan, Susan, you've got a call from the Mainland!" [Laughs.] Now it seems so silly, but that was a big deal. So it was George, and he called, and he offered

me a job. And so I took it, because he said I'd really like it, and it never got cold here. It never snowed. He just lied. [They laugh.] I gave him hell about it when I got here. So then John Peterson just looked for jobs around here and job at Bridgewater teaching anthropology at Bridgewater State.

TAYLOR: This is quite a change to go from . . .

PETERSON: Hawaii to the . . . .

TAYLOR: . . . sunny Hawaii to "It never snows; it's not cold Wood Hole."

PETERSON: Well, that's what George promised me. He said, "It's very mild. It's this little peninsula. It's surrounded by water. The temperatures are moderate. The ocean does all that." And I thought . . . .

TAYLOR: Didn't talk about the 50-mile-per-hour wind off the ocean or anything like that?

PETERSON: No, didn't talk about any of that. Didn't talk about that.

TAYLOR: And you had never been here before?

PETERSON: I'd been on Cape before. My dad was born in Boston, and we'd come back to Boston to visit relatives when I was growing up, so I had been on Cape. I had never been to Woods Hole.

TAYLOR: OK, well, I'm going to ask you two questions: (1) what specifically was your job going to be? And (2) what were your first impressions of Woods Hole when you first came here?

VOICE: I have to uh change tape.

TAYLOR: Oh, OK.

PETERSON: Good, I . . . . [Tape stops and starts again.]

VOICE: And I'm all set.

TAYLOR: OK, now before I get into the two questions that I asked you prior to the film running out on us, anthropology's really interesting. You didn't take any formalized courses in fish biology or anything like that, is that right?

PETERSON: No, I learned on the job.

TAYLOR: OK, so basically then, your background is one that's really straight anthropological, but you developed an interest and learned on the job the part that dealt with ocean creatures.

PETERSON: Well, one of the things about getting a Ph.D. is learning to educate yourself. I mean that's the whole process, and you show that you did it by writing a thesis and so on and so

forth. The skills that you learned for accumulating information aren't limited necessarily to that discipline, so while I was doing a study of the Honolulu fish auction, and ended up doing a computer simulation, I also had to learn some computer stuff, because if you recall this was, again, a long time ago. When I was doing my Ph.D. you were required to have two languages, and so I had Japanese and FORTRAN, because I used FORTRAN to write my computer simulation that was part of my thesis. So part of what you do as a graduate student is learn other things, so the fact that I also read up about the fish was just as outrageous as having to [laughingly] learn FORTRAN, I can tell you, so . . . . [Laughs.] There were a number of things.

TAYLOR: To me it's very fascinating that as I look at the people that have staffed the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution over the years, for lack of a better word there's a certain eclecticism about them.

PETERSON: We're greedy.

TAYLOR: I know people that were hired as photographers but ended up building a sail for the *Alvin*. I see someone that was a math interest to start with but got into anthropology and then got into fish and fish culture and all that kind of thing, and it just seems to me that the people that come here seem to have an ability to draw in lots of expertise from different areas that may not have been their basic field of study to start with.

PETERSON: Well, I think that's right, and I think when you have a very active scientific community, particularly the Woods Hole community, with the--when I was here--the noon lectures, where you'd bring your sandwich and go listen to someone do 20 minutes or half an hour, or 40 minutes on their research. It was like being back in college, learning basic information. It was a nice way to spend your lunch hour, so I think a lot of the people that I know from the Oceanographic <u>are</u> greedy. They're anxious to know more, not less. Friends of ours talk about lifelong learning, and that's what we do. So you asked about . . . .

TAYLOR: Yeah, what specifically was going to be your job here at the Institution?

PETERSON: Well, I had applied to be a postdoctoral fellow in the Marine Policy Program, which was a brand-new program established by Paul Fye. It started in 1972. I came in September of 1973 to study the New England fishing industry and to look at the connection between the fish and the fish stocks and the fishery, the people who were catching the fish, and I'd written a small proposal which apparently was appealing enough and had some letters of recommendation that were apparently appealing enough so that they gave me a postdoc, and . . . .

TAYLOR: Could you define something for me?

PETERSON: Sure.

TAYLOR: Could you define exactly what the Marine Policy Department does?

PETERSON: Ah. Well, I can tell you what the Marine Policy Department did. It wasn't a department. It was a program. At the time there were five or six social scientists here. Paul Fye, supported by other scientists from the Institution, realized that doing pure science alone wasn't enough, and the Institution needed a way of reaching out, understanding more about the implications of the science being done in the five departments, in national and world politics. So, at the time the Law of the Sea discussions were going on, and there was a strong interest in fisheries management because of excessive over fishing by many of the Eastern European nations in the waters of the Atlantic, so there was a lot of interest in the fisheries. This was in the early 1970s. So the Marine Policy Program was established by Dr. Fye because he wanted to bring social scientists in who would interact with the natural scientists here, and the idea I think was that the social scientists would learn from the natural scientists. I think it went both ways, but . . . . So that first year they had only three or four people, and I'm afraid I'm blanking on who they were, but the second year we had a couple of international lawyers, one from India, one from the former Soviet Union. Leah Smith, who is an economist, who'd come up here from Duke University or the University of North Carolina. I can't remember. It was in North Carolina. I think she did her Ph.D. at Duke and had been teaching at the University of North Carolina. And a couple of other people. I'm blanking on who they were, but they were six of us, and we were housed in Crowell House, which is a delightful building on top of the hill across from the Post Office. The Policy Program was headed by George Cadwalader until the day before I got here, and then George left to found the Penikese Island School, and Ed Miles, who was teaching at MIT, now a professor at the University of Washington in Seattle, had agreed to take on the job as Marine Policy Director, and he worked with us on our projects, but we were essentially here pretty much unguided. I got here the first day. My plane landed on September 5, and I arrived at Boston Logan Airport, with my parents there to meet me, and they had bought a car for us, and they had their car, and I arrived with 18 pieces of luggage, which included some furniture which I'd disassembled, and a Great Dane and two cats, and everything I owned in crates or boxes or whatever, because you could bring accompanied luggage for $5 a container, and the first four were free, so that was the cheapest way to move here. So we loaded all this

stuff in the car, and I'd rented a house in Woods Hole, and my parents had already been staying there. So we got moved in, and the next morning I walked down to the village and went down to Bigelow and checked in and got my picture taken, and Denise Backus was working there in the office, and she was wonderful and friendly and told me things, and she said, "Oh, you know, another person from Marine Policy has just checked in, and her name is Leah Smith," and she said, "and there she is." And I met Leah, and it turned out that one of my housemates in Honolulu had been a good friend of hers in North Carolina, so we immediately bonded and became good friends to this day, so um she and I both worked on fish stuff. But anyway then we went up to Crowell House, and I had a delightful office in the nursery, with hand-painted walls, and sort of wandered around, and Paul Fye came in, and he was so pleased to meet me and so enthusiastic, and he said, "Well, come on, I'm going to just take you around and show you this and that and the other thing." He dragged me all over Woods Hole. I met John Ryther, who was then chairman of the Biology Department, and told him a little bit about what I wanted to do, and then he said, "Well you need to talk to Dick Backus," and so I went downstairs and I met Dick Backus, and told him what I was doing, and Dick said, "Oh, you really need to meet these people and those people," and so by that time I was brain dead, because I'd gotten off the plane the night before, my Great Dane had discovered a skunk that night, so we had no sleep, because we had this huge smelly dog in the house. Anyway, . . .

TAYLOR: Overwhelming experience.

PETERSON: [Laughs.] It was an overwhelming experience but delightful, so the first day I meet a lot of people and then spent the next few days [laughingly] trying to recover from the experience, and then eventually . . . . I have to tell you a few things about coming to Woods Hole. I was young. I was 26 years old, almost 27. I had a brand-new Ph.D. I had never had a job that was a professional job. I mean I'd done lots of stuff, but I wasn't quite sure how to set out doing this, and there were no role models. The other people in the policy program were as confused as I was. There was no senior staff. There was Ed, who was the director, and he wasn't here. He was in Cambridge. So we were kind of off in this isolated building by ourselves. We'd show up every day. We had a wonderful secretary named Caleroy Hatzikon[SP?], who had been Paul Fye's secretary, when he was director, and then she sort of was our mother hen, and she was our source of culture. She told us about things and how things were done, and who to contact, and she knew everything. In fact, Noel McLean, for whom this

building is named, also used Cal as his source, and a lot of mornings I'd get to the office, and Cal'd be talking to him on the phone. He was chairman of the Board of Trustees then. He used her as his sort of mole, I think, [They laugh.] because many mornings they were on the phone. So she introduced us to things. Paul Fye wasn't quite sure what to do with Leah Smith and me, now, this is going to sound strange, but, in 1973, the fall of 1973, there were only two other professional women on the staff--Betty Bunce and Mary Sears. At that time both Betty and Mary were probably in their mid- to late 50s, maybe even older, I don't know, and they were both in science departments. They had worked their way up through the ranks and had achieved status by having been here for a long time. Leah Smith and I were the first women with Ph.D.s hired here, and we were social scientists. So they really didn't know what to do with us, and I can remember Paul Fye being a little bit confused, and his wife Ruth was so friendly and charming. She said, "Well, I'll introduce you to some friends. There's going to be a tea on a Thursday morning," and of course it was a group of women from Woods Hole, and it was at Fred Grassle's mother's house. I remember it well. Fred Grassle was a member of the biology faculty then, about my age, maybe a year older, a new faculty member here, and Mrs. Grassle lived down the way, and we were invited to tea, and of course we met all the wives of new faculty. MacLeish had just come to head up the communications *Oceanus* thing. We met his wife, and Leah and I didn't know quite know what to do with it. I mean we'd both been to teas. I mean we were both middle-class kids. We knew how to deal with a tea. But we didn't know how to deal with it professionally, and it was good to meet those people, but it would have been better to have met their husbands.

TAYLOR: You're bringing up a very, very interesting point, in that when you first described what you were doing in Hawaii, I said to myself, "Ah, Marine Policy is absolutely custom made for what she wants to do." But then you got here, and there was no one to mentor you. I remember Bob Ballard telling me Al Uchupi had to show him how to wrote a good scientific report. He needed that mentoring kind of thing, and then you get thrown into a really kind of an untenable situation. You were being treated as a woman rather than as a scientist.

PETERSON: Right, and Leah and I sort of talked our way through, and we managed to figure out how to do it, but it wasn't easy. I mean we were a little bit freaks, and I think if we had been biologists or chemists or geologists it wouldn't have been any easier. I still think they wouldn't have known how to deal. The one thing that I always said as a social scientist is that Woods

Hole is a wonderful place. It attracts marvelous scientists, but they're not necessarily known for their social skills. We always had a little joke about make eye contact, have a conversation. [Laughs.] Here's how you start a conversation. That's not true for all of them obviously, but [laughs] they uh weren't very good at it, and many of them were opposed to the Marine Policy Program. They thought it was a waste of resources and a waste of time. So we were here not so much being considered for our personal flaws, but just the fact that we were social scientists in a natural science institution. So you've already discovered from this conversation that I don't just sit around and wait for things to happen. John Ryther had introduced me to this guy named Dick Backus who studied fish, and I needed to learn more about fish, and I was sitting in a wonderful old house, but they were all other social scientists, and I wasn't learning anything about the Institution, so I went down, and I asked Dick Backus if I could have a cubbyhole in his lab, and he said, "Oh, I don't know. We'll have to get . . . ." [Clears throat.] This was a few months later. By then George Grice was department chairman in biology, and he said, "I don't know. We'll have to get permission," and so on and so forth, and so I went to talk to George Grice, and I said, "Look." George hated the Policy Program. [Clears throat] But he agreed with my theory that I would learn more about how the Institution worked if I were in a lab than if I were sitting up on the hill talking to myself. So Dick Backus graciously invited me into Redfield 120, where I spent many happy years. I think I was there for 7-1/2 years, and I learned a lot about fish and went to sea on a cruise with his group and just had a marvelous time. I learned about fish. I learned about science. I met folks in the Biology Department. I met my husband, John Teal, in Backus's lab. Backus is a gregarious fellow, and every morning at 10 o'clock folks would show up in the lab carrying their coffee cups and their teabags or their jar of instant coffee, and we'd have an old kettle on the Bunsen burner, and we'd boil water and we'd have coffee. People would just sit all over the place. They'd pull out the file drawer and sit in the file drawer, and it was a wonderful magnet for people from other departments, mostly Biology, but other departments. They knew that you could come by Backus's and have a conversation about anything, literally anything.

TAYLOR: Now, we're going to get into your days.

PETERSON: Yeah.

TAYLOR: We're going to ask about a typical day and what a day at sea was like and all this sort of thing. I'm interested. After your tea party and you went home, what'd you say to your husband?

PETERSON: Well, mostly we were talking about the day's events. [Laughs.] Mostly we were talking about the odd things about the day. That fall of '73 was really crammed, not only with being a female in the Marine Policy Program, but starting my work, and I um decided I would study the fishing industry in New Bedford because it was then--and still is--the most valuable fishing port in the United States. And so I got my Toyota pickup truck and I drove to New Bedford, and I went to the National Marine Fisheries Service Office there, and I told them what I wanted to do, and one of the guys there--Dennis Maine[SP?]--agree to take me to the fish auction and show me where the boats tied up, and introduced me to a few people, so he spent a couple of days showing me around the New Bedford waterfront.

TAYLOR: So you were able to make contacts.

PETERSON: I made contacts, and again these are all early in the morning, because the fishing industry starts early, so what I remember about those first days in Woods Hole . . . . First of all, I'd been living near the equator, so the day and night shifts through the year weren't that different. Suddenly here I was in New England, and it was the fall, and the days were getting shorter, and I was getting up at 4:30 in the morning to drive to New Bedford, and 195 hadn't been built yet, so I was taking Route 6. It was under construction, but it wasn't finished. It wasn't finished for several years, and so I was driving down Route 6 into New Bedford, and New Bedford had been urban-renewed, and as my dad said it looked like it had been bombed. [Laughs.] They had put in this highway right along the ocean, and they'd ripped down wonderful old buildings and hadn't put anything there, and it was just terrible. So I was getting up early in the morning and driving to the fish auction and starting to meet the boat owners and the fish dealers and the processing-plant owners.

TAYLOR: There's one thing that we haven't touched on that comes at the end of your time in Hawaii, when you were off at a job. You were a family of two professionals. You were still living in a period where there was a lot of traditionalism around--the man's career demands that . . . . How did you two work that situation out? You had the job. He didn't at that point, but he said, "OK, we'll go with your career path."

PETERSON: He thought it sounded like a lot of fun.

TAYLOR: Well, see I don't hear that from everyone. This is why I'm looking for how it was worked out in your situation.

PETERSON: Well, when we talked about geography, where we wanted to be, being on the East Coast was certainly desirable, so we had talked about whoever got a job in a place where we wanted to live. I mean, let's face it; we didn't want to go to Des Moines, so we did have some preferences. So when I got this job he said, "Hey, sounds great."

TAYLOR: OK, so it was not an issue.

PETERSON: No, I don't think it was an issue at all. And he loved New England, so he was really pleased to be here.

TAYLOR: Where was he from originally?

PETERSON: Illinois, Lake Forest, so slightly different life than mine in the Western suburbs, but hey! So . . . .

TAYLOR: OK, now so you came here and you started to groove in. How did you make your determination of, "OK, I don't have anyone that's going to really mentor me in this situation, so this is the way I'm going to proceed"? How did that all come about?

PETERSON: I don't remember. I just . . . . I'd done most of my thesis work on my own, because my faculty didn't know what I was doing, so I just kept doing what I'd done before. I just figured it out. I talked to people. I mean I'm not shy. I'd get on the phone and I'd talk to people, and I'd find out who knew what. The fishing industry had some pretty active associations, and I found out about those, talked to the National Marine Fisheries Service. Bob Edwards down at Fisheries introduced me to a lot of people. I just wandered around till I <u>found</u> stuff.

TAYLOR: You essentially kind of got thrown into the water to learn to swim pretty early in your academic career.

PETERSON: I'm not sure I learned to swim, but I got thrown in the water. You're right. [Laughs.] And I'm pretty self-motivated. I mean I <u>like</u> to do things, and I like to get them done, and I like to get them done and I like to move on and do the next thing, so I didn't have to be pushed. So I <u>think</u> I just did what I do. I don't know. It's personality. I'm a <u>middle</u> child, so this is . . . . Middle children are self-sufficient.

TAYLOR: This is true. The only reason I ask that is because kind of traditionally here, if you're in the biologies, the geologies, what have you, yes, you'll come up with your program, but you're going to have people around.

PETERSON: What you get as a postdoc, you would be in somebody's lab working with them, and that was one of the flaws about the Marine Policy Program, and in fact the first year, after I'd been here only a few months, Leah and I said, "Hey, the problem with the Policy Program is that people just come for a year, then they leave. There's no continuity. There's no way of explaining to the next people coming." So we went and talked to Paul Fye, and we said, "Look, Paul, we'll raise the money for our research, and then you should let us stay here, because we'll provide continuity, and the next group of fellows'll come in, and we'll be able to show them. We'll be able to cut a lot off. They'll get more work done." And he agreed that was a good idea. So [clears throat] I'd gotten some money from Bob Edwards [clears throat] down at National Marine Fisheries to look at fisheries-management issues, and because I'd been studying the fishing industry, and because I'd been reading about just plain old fish biology, and then starting to work with Backus in his lab, and reading some of that stuff, I um . . . . This is going to be just amazing to you, but people who manage fish were biologists. And they knew a lot about fish, and they knew endless amounts about fish. But people who catch fish are fishermen, and the reason you manage fish is because there are too many of them or too few of them, or there's some distributional issues. So the people who were managing fish knew about fish, but they didn't know about fishermen. Well, a few of the people who knew about fish realized that that was a flaw. [They laugh.] That they were having a hard time, because it's an absolute classic, when the fish stocks get scarce you start limiting what the fishermen can do, and the first thing you do is you limit the gear. Well, they've invented some new gear which allows them to catch more, faster, better, ta-da-ta-da. So we'll constrict the gear: bigger mesh, smaller nets, da-ta-da-ta-da. So there used to be tons and tons of gear research, not just to show how to catch fish but how to not catch fish, so it was sort of like wrestling with one arm tied behind your back. Well, those fishermen are so clever. Every time they'd make a new rule about a gear restriction or something else that would constrain, they would think of a way around it. So the attempts to manage fish in the United States in the early years were really funny, because it was a sort of challenge of the wits. The fishermen just had to figure how to get around it, either legally or illegally, and they did, because the fishermen were, of course, making a living, and they had the

boats to pay for, and their families to raise, and the fisheries managers were trying to conserve the stock so that there'd be enough for basic reproduction and so on and so forth, which are noble motives too. But they often weren't together. So Bob Edwards funded me to do some work on fisheries management, to look at methods for combining knowledge of fishermen and knowledge of fish and some basic social and economic principles. So that's what I did for a few years. I looked at limited entry. I looked at other mechanisms that would allow fish stocks to be maintained at a reasonable level.

TAYLOR: So an anthropologic background, then, gave you a much more generalized look at the field than the scientist who's studying the thickness of fish scales and such-and-such an area of the water, which is very narrow.

PETERSON: Yes, but I needed their information. We needed to have the population estimates. People needed to be able to tell the age of the fish and the sex of the fish. I mean you need all the basic science in order to do the good policy, but you need to be able to connect it, and I think this was a revolution in not just the United States, but everywhere--that fisheries management had been done by biologists, and suddenly it needed to be done by biologists who moved a little bit this way, and social scientists who moved a little bit that way--that we needed to marry up that information. So um and because it was early days, I think it was easier for an anthropologist to learn biology than it was for a biologist to learn anthropology. So I mean not that I'm that great a biologist, but I can read the technical literature, and I know what it says, so I'm OK.

TAYLOR: Which is what you need.

PETERSON: Which is what I needed to do.

TAYLOR: Now, did you and Leah lean on each other at all when you first were here? I mean were you kind of like each other's sounding boards?

PETERSON: Oh, a lot, and she had a lot of contacts in Boston. She'd actually been living in Woods Hole for a year before she became a policy fellow, and commuting to the Bank of Boston. She worked as an economist there, and so she had a network in Boston and knew people, because she'd already lived here for a year. Her husband's family had always summered on the Vineyard, and so they had a little house over there. So she had a much bigger network here than I did, and I used that a lot. Most of my colleagues from graduate school . . . . Some of them were on the East Coast, I mean Philadelphia and so and so forth, and I kept in touch with them and saw them, but it wasn't the same as having people nearby.

TAYLOR: Now, when did your husband's position come along during all this?
PETERSON: Oh, he had it before he came here. He got it. As soon as I got the Woods Hole job, he got out the map and looked to see where there were colleges in the area and sent his resume off to Bridgewater, and they hired him.
TAYLOR: OK, he was going to go the straight academic route, then.
PETERSON: Yup, that's what he wanted to do.
TAYLOR: And you're straight applied.
PETERSON: Yup.
TAYLOR: OK. How did you match those two? No, I'm not asking that well. In terms of a conversation, I taught. My wife's a school librarian. We have had some very spirited conversations from my viewpoint and from her viewpoint. How did that work out with you and your husband?
PETERSON: I don't think it was ever a problem, because we were both interested in a lot of the same sort of raw material. He'd done his thesis on these Hawaiian religious groups, and his real love was primitive art, so he came and was teaching a lot of the material from his thesis, and then a lot of basic cultural anthropology, and I could provide him with some raw material as well from current things. So um the position at Bridgewater was cut that next year, and he went and taught down at Providence College, which was also a really good experience. He enjoyed that very much. The department at Providence College was slightly more interesting, a broader background, a bigger department than Bridgewater, so he then went to Providence College, and at that point we moved off Cape. We bought land and built a little house in Marion, so that the commute was more or less equal.
TAYLOR: Plus a lovely area.
PETERSON: Plus a nice place to be, right.
TAYLOR: Now about how old were you at this time?
PETERSON: Oh, late 20s, 27-28.
TAYLOR: That's pretty early to start off on a rather dynamic career.
PETERSON: Well, I think if you look at the ages of the scientists here . . . . I mean we often exchange life stories. Most of them came here . . . . Many of them had their Ph.D.s by the time they were in their mid-20s and got started, some of course not until their 40s, but hey! But there were a lot of young ones. Backus when was a pretty young man when <u>he</u> got here, although the

War was there in the middle. John Teal came here in his 30s, but had his Ph.D. by the time he was 26. John Stegeman came here with a brand-new Ph.D. as a postdoc, and I think he was 26, maybe even 25, so there are lots of young ones.

TAYLOR: Did you socialize with the people from the Institution, or were your social [??] from outside the Institution?

PETERSON: [Coughs.] I think almost all was from within the Institution. Some from wherever my husband was teaching, but mostly from the Institution. [Coughs.] Mostly within the Poly Program and the Biology Department.

TAYLOR: And what kinds of things for social entertainment would you do, you and your husband?

PETERSON: Oh, you'd go to dinner, go to movies, go to Boston. The [clears throat] third year I was here um John Peterson had decided that teaching at Bridgewater and teaching at Providence College had some drawbacks, and one of Leah Smith's brothers-in-law or cousins had done a postdoc at the Harvard School of Public Health, and so she mentioned it to John Peterson, and he said, "Well, that sounds sort of interesting." So he did a postdoc at the Harvard School of Public Health, and then from there went on to work at Hebrew Rehab working with the elderly, and worked in Boston from then on. In the early '70s Boston wasn't in very good shape either, either economically or physically, and he was commuting from our house in Marion by bus, and then taking the Greenline out and doing his stuff, and he saw an ad for an apartment on Beacon Street, a condominium for $16,000.

TAYLOR: Equivalent to one month's rent now. [They laugh.]

PETERSON: Right. So he said, "Let's go look at it this weekend." And we did, and it was a really nice restored brownstone, and so I called my dad and I said, "I need to borrow $3,000 for six months," and we bought it. So then we had a little apartment in Boston and a little house down in Marion, which was nice, because you could then have sort of the best of both worlds. The Woods Hole community . . . . I'm sure it's still a problem. It's physically so isolated; that for married professionals to both have careers here is very difficult. I mean there have been a few conditions where both husband and wife worked here, but for the most part that doesn't work. In the old days the man got the job here, the woman had to find a job someplace else. In my case, I got the job here; the man had to find a job some place else, but the someplace else was generally Boston or Providence, because there wasn't anything else to go to, so it made it very

difficult for professional couples to come here, and I think that may still be the case. I'm not certain. I'm not in touch with the young people coming in nowadays.

TAYLOR: Well, I do always ask them that, because when you have a professional couple, there are always tradeoffs, and I said, there's accommodations that have to be made, with very few exceptions. Even the people here, like the Tiveys, Meg and Mark--I mean there are times she's getting onboard and he's getting off. Those are difficult kinds of situations.

PETERSON: Well, it turns out that being a professional couple is difficult whether . . . .

[END OF TAPE 1]

PETERSON: There's still lots of accommodations to be made. So we worked that one out because the real-estate market was so depressed in Boston, and the monthly payments on the $13,000 balance were like $120 a month or something, [They laugh.] so it wasn't a big deal, even on our strange salaries in those days. When I came here as a postdoc I made $9,000 a year. That was my salary, which actually didn't seem so great because, as I said, as a graduate student I had been working and making money, so I guess I thought I was going to make more, but hey! $9,000 was OK. It eventually went up.

TAYLOR: You could buy a lot for $9,000 in . . . .

PETERSON: You could in 1973. You're right. So I continued to do work on fish and I was relatively politically active there. I worked with a lot of the fishermen's groups. Because I was funded in part by the Federal Government, working with Bob Edwards down at the National Marine Fisheries Service, I was able to get appointed as a member of the US delegation to ICNAF, which the International Commission for North Atlantic Fisheries, which was an 18-member international group that managed the fisheries of the North Atlantic, and it was headquartered in Canada, and it had members from all around the Atlantic, as well as a number of Eastern European nations that had factory fishing efforts here in the Atlantic. As you recall, in those days, we had a three-mile limit, and so the factory ships were visible from shore when they came in. We had really serious over-fishing on almost every stock of fish in the '60s and early '70s. The American fishermen and some American politicians were lobbying for extending the fisheries limit to 12 miles, and then eventually to 200 miles, all of this in the context of the Law of the Sea.

TAYLOR: Which we still haven't signed.

PETERSON: Which we still haven't signed. So there were a lot of discussions. So I was fortunate to be on this delegation to the International Commission, which met in Halifax, Nova Scotia every spring, and there learned the science from the scientists from all the different countries, sat in on the committees. We were discussing stock size and potential harvests, and how those harvests were going to be divided up amongst the nations, and how they were going to be patrolled and regulated, and so on and so forth. It was clearly an imperfect system, because it had no authority except the goodwill of the participants, and there wasn't always goodwill among the participants, so it was very awkward. At the same time I was doing that, and this will tie back together in a second, this wonderful group that had been started in Boston called SEA, the Sea Education Association, had moved from Boston to Woods Hole and had space in MBL, in Lilly, and they were teaching undergraduates and--actually, in those first years--high-school kids marine science. And the fellow who was heading it up asked if I'd be interested in teaching a class on fisheries policy, and I said, "Sure." And this was my second year in Woods Hole, so it was '74. And so I started teaching that, and one of my first students was Seth Garfield, who now runs a wonderful aquaculture venture out on Cutty Hunk, and is a supporter of the Penikese Island School, and teaches down in Providence, a wonderful fellow. So he was one of my early students. I learned to teach in that setting, because I hadn't taught. I'd just done research, so I was not a classical academic. So I started teaching this marine policy course, and I'd practice in front of Backus and the other guys in the lab and ask them how things would go, and I liked teaching. I liked engaging the students and making them think, and showing them new ways to look at things. I'd taught nursery school, so I'd had 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds, and I really did that, so transferring it to college kids was a delight. Well, in the old days there was a program every Tuesday night, I think it was, called the Journal Club--maybe it was Monday night--and speakers from within the community or visiting scholars were invited to make a formal lecture, and it was in Redfield Auditorium. And Buck Ketchum, who was a delightful fellow, a big man, with suspenders and kind of a big belly, would always sit in the front row. This is what you did in the evenings. I mean you'd go home. You'd have dinner. You'd come back, and you'd go to Journal Club, because again it was easy way to learn about what was going on in oceanography. Buck always sat in the front row, and he almost always fell asleep. So I was invited to give a Journal Club talk, and it was my goal to keep Buck awake. [They laugh.] And I can remember giving the Journal Club talk. It was the first major talk I'd ever given to anybody, but I was

pretty confident because I'd been teaching these classes at SEA, and I knew my material, and I can remember how I started it, because I used this same analogy with the kids from then on. I got this . . . . Redfield Auditorium . . . . There were probably a hundred and some people out there, and I started my lecture about fisheries management by saying, "OK, I want to ask you here in the audience, have any of you ever been fishing? Just raise your hands." And you'd see hands pop up all over the place, because it's that kind of community. They'd raise their hands, and I'd say, "OK, OK, where'd you catch, and what did you catch?" And they'd shout out, they caught bluefish, or they caught stripers, or they caught flounder, or they caught fluke, or they'd caught a tuna or something like this, and I'd say, "Great. Great. Now, tell me. Before you caught that fish, whose was it?" And I'd get silence. And then you could start to hear mumblings in the audience. And it comes down to this: it wasn't anybody's fish, or it was everybody's fish. And this is the game of fisheries management. If you think it's everybody fish, if you think it's common property, then you manage it in one way. If you think it's nobody's fish, and it's just there to be caught by whoever is entrepreneurial enough to catch it, then you get a different outcome, and my training taught me it was everyone's fish, and that our government, through whatever entity, had a responsibility for managing that resource and managing it well, and so that was my basic philosophy for fisheries management, and that's how I went on to push for a 200-mile limit, because it gave us the legal capacity to know that that resource was ours and to manage it, and I had a wonderful time doing that. The politics of the 200-mile limit, all the roller-coaster of who was going to vote for it, and who wasn't going to vote for it, and all the machinations with changing the wording in the bill in order to get one more senator to sign it, and I was just in the background, working with a couple of the fishermen's groups, trying to push and shove, and helping them prepare testimony. I remember at one point meeting with Rogers Morton, who was then Secretary of Commerce, and the fishermen were really nervous, and before the meeting they said, "OK, Susan, you know how to meet with this person and what to do. What do we do? What do we call him?" And I said, "You call him 'Mr. Secretary.'" And they said, "Ohmigod." And we were going to have a dinner with him, [clears throat] and beforehand a couple of them said, "You know just go over it with us again about the forks, and the knives, and the salt and pepper, and that plate for the bread. Which one is mine?" It was really fun. We had a great time. We would meet for breakfast, and we'd have etiquette lessons. But they wanted to make an impression on him, and

they didn't want to appear bumbling, and so we [laughingly] would do this, and I had a really interesting time.

TAYLOR: But you obviously had made a real impression on them, where they trusted you to take them through this situation.

PETERSON: Oh, yeah, we got along really well. Going back to the ICNAF, this international commission that met in Halifax every year, there were a number of Americans who were on the delegation, some from the fishing industry (harvesting), some from processing, some from the marketing side, and then the scientific coterie. The way we really got to know one another was that the meetings generally started at 9, so every morning at 6 o'clock we would meet in the lobby of the hotel, and we'd go for a walk, because the rest of the day, in through the evening and well into the night, you were into the bits and pieces of fish, so you got to know your group. And sometimes folks from other countries would join us. But generally this was pretty much a core group of eight or ten Americans out wandering through Halifax early in the morning, talking and walking to keep from going crazy locked up in a windowless room the rest of the day. So I really enjoyed that work. I enjoyed visiting all the ports in New England and learning about the fishing industry, learning how it was structured, how the boats were operated financially and technically, and what the skills of the crew and the knowledge base of the captains and the engineers and the navigators, and so forth.

TAYLOR: I think we're just about out of film here.

VOICE: Ten more minutes.

TAYLOR: OK. We're past our . . . .

PETERSON: Oh, yeah. [Clears throat]

TAYLOR: I usually try to go two hours at a stretch. I . . . .

PETERSON: As you know, I can talk forever, but . . . . [Tape stops and starts again.]

VOICE: OK.